

Tobacco Surveillance Report

Smokeless Tobacco Use in Montana



"Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco does cause cancer... Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States"

U.S. Surgeon General
Richard H. Carmona

Testimony before the U.S. House
of Representatives
June 3, 2003

Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program

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Chew. Snuff. Spit. Dip. These are all examples of smokeless tobacco (SLT) products. Smokeless tobacco is not harmless tobacco, and it is not a safe alternative to smoking. SLT contains 28 known carcinogens and increases the risk of oral and pancreatic cancer, and is also associated with recession of the gums, gum disease, and tooth decay.¹ In addition, research indicates that SLT is associated with an increased risk of fatal heart attack and stroke.²

Smokeless tobacco products are highly addictive, and youth are at particular risk for nicotine addiction. The amount of nicotine absorbed from these products is substantially greater than the amount delivered by a cigarette.³ The Surgeon General Report on *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People* found that youth who use SLT are more likely to become cigarette smokers.⁴

Tobacco industry documents indicate that SLT products are aggressively marketed towards youth, and that the industry has a strategy to progressively move youth from candy or fruit flavored products to more robust varieties for the nicotine dependent user.⁵ Price is a deterrent for youth to use tobacco products, and increasing the unit price of tobacco products (which can be done by increasing the excise tax of tobacco products) is a recommended Best Practice by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.⁶ Presently, there is less excise tax on SLT products than cigarettes.

The variety of SLT products that have entered the U.S. market has substantially increased in recent years.⁵ Recent products introduced in Montana include snus and electronic cigarettes. None of these new products have been proven safe; despite this, more marketing of these new products in Montana can be expected.

This report summarizes the burden of SLT in Montana among youth and adults using state and national survey data, and tobacco industry data from the Federal Trade Commission.

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Montana Compared to the United States

Smokeless tobacco prevalence is significantly higher in Montana compared to the United States.

- According to the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 13% of Montana high school students were smokeless tobacco (SLT) users compared to 8% of U.S. students ($p < 0.05$; Figure 1).⁷
- Seven percent of Montana adults were SLT users in 2009, while only 3% of U.S. adults were users.^{8,9}

Figure 1. Smokeless tobacco use reported by high school students (grades 9-12) in Montana and the United States, 1997-2009, Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

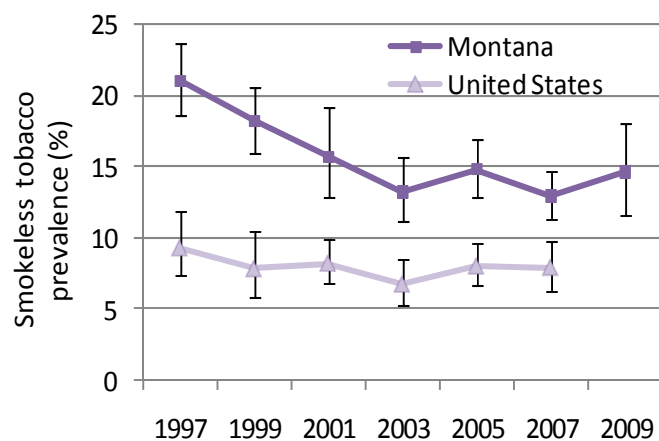
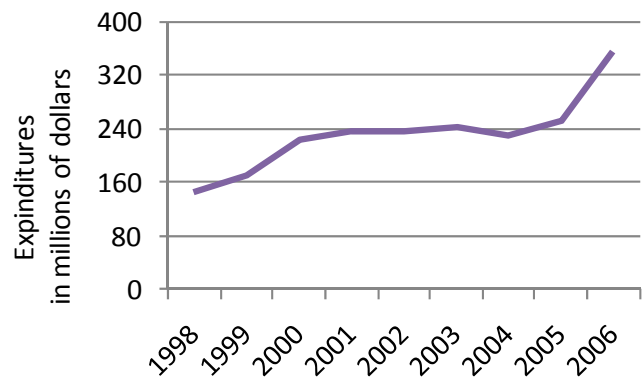


Figure 2. Total smokeless tobacco advertising and promotional expenditures among the five major smokeless tobacco manufacturers*, 1998-2006, Federal Trade Commission.



Smokeless Tobacco Prevalence Trends

Smokeless tobacco use among youth has declined over the past 10 years. Use of SLT use reported by Montana high school students has decreased since the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program was first adequately funded in 1999 (Figure 1).⁷

Smokeless tobacco prevalence among adult men has remained the same since 2005. The Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS) found that the prevalence of SLT use among men remained virtually unchanged from 2005 (13%) to 2009 (13%).⁸

Marketing of Smokeless Tobacco Products

Smokeless tobacco manufacturers have increased the advertising and promotion of their products by 144% since 1998. Since the Master Settlement Agreement in 1998, the amount of money spent on advertising and promoting SLT products among the top five SLT manufacturers* in the U.S. has increased from \$145 million to \$354 million in 2006 (Figure 2).¹⁰ The dramatic increase in SLT marketing in recent years may, in part, explain the stagnate estimates of SLT use in Montana and the U.S.

*North Atlantic Trading Company, Inc.; Reynolds American, Inc.; Swedish Match North America, Inc.; Swisher International Group, Inc.; and UST, Inc.

Characteristics of Smokeless Tobacco Users in Montana

Table. Use of smokeless tobacco reported by adults in Montana by gender, age, race and education status, 2004-05 and 2008-09, Adult Tobacco Survey.

Gender	2004-05		2008-09	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Men	12	9-17	13	10-18
Women	—	—	2	0-4
Age group (yrs)				
Men only				
18-34	21	13-32	20	11-34
35-54	12	8-18	15	10-22
55+	5	3-8	5	3-8
Race				
Men only				
White	12	9-17	14	10-19
American Indian	—	—	—	—
Education				
Men only				
≤ High school	12	9-17	18	11-28
High school > College	18	12-27	17	11-26
≥ College	11	7-18	5	3-10

— Indicates that there were too few respondents (<20) to calculate a prevalence estimate.

Note: Comparisons between 2004-05 and 2008-09 were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$) in each gender, age, race, and education group.

Nearly all smokeless tobacco users are male.

- In 2008-09, 13% of men were SLT users, while 2% of women reported using SLT ($p<0.01$; Table).⁸
- In 2008, 15% of boys were current SLT users compared 4% of girls ($p<0.05$).¹¹

Smokeless tobacco use highest among men aged 18 to 34 and men with less education.

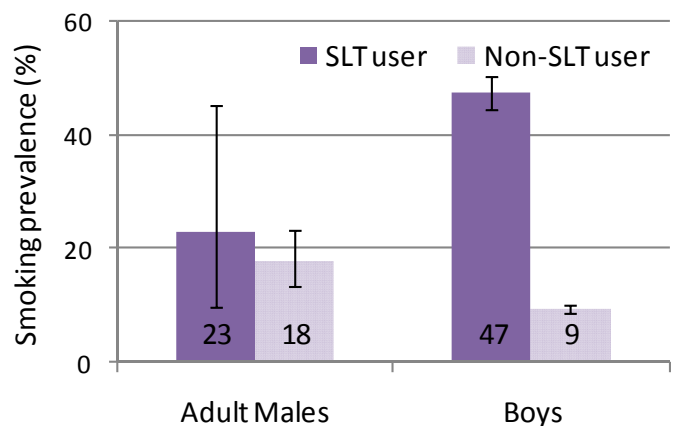
- In 2008-09, men aged 18 to 34 were five times more likely to be SLT users compared to men 55 years or older (Odds Ratio [OR]=5.0, 95% CI= 2.0-12.1).⁸
- In 2008-09, men with a high school education or less were four times more likely to be SLT users than men with a college education or more (OR=4.0, 95% CI= 1.6-10.4).⁸
- From 2004-05 to 2008-09, SLT use did not change among any gender, age, race, or education level group ($p>0.05$; Table).⁸

Dual Use of Cigarettes and Smokeless Tobacco

Many Montanans who use smokeless tobacco also smoke. Cigarette smoking was significantly higher among boys who were current SLT users compared to boys who were not SLT users ($p<0.05$; Figure 3).¹¹

There was no statistically significant difference in current smoking among adult males by SLT status ($p>0.05$; Figure 3).⁸

Figure 3. Smoking prevalence by smokeless tobacco use status among Montana adult males and boys, 2009 Adult Tobacco Survey and 2008 Prevention Needs Assessment.



Report Highlights

- Smokeless tobacco use presents a significant burden in Montana.
- Smokeless tobacco use is high among men and boys.
- Many smokeless tobacco users also smoke cigarettes.

Recommendations

Smokeless tobacco use (SLT) among youth has decreased, but SLT use is still significantly higher in Montana than in the U.S. The smokeless tobacco market is expanding, and Montana is experiencing increased marketing of these addictive products. Tobacco control efforts need to focus on decreasing the number of Montana youth who start using SLT to avoid a lifetime of nicotine addiction. These efforts may include:

- Increasing the price of SLT products.
- Dentists and primary care providers encouraging patients who use SLT to quit, and recommend proven cessation methods, such as the Montana Tobacco Quitline.

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